

WHISPERING PINES WINTER YURT GUIDE

The Whispering Pines yurt is located off the groomed Gold Fork Loop at the Lodgepole trail intersection. This is a popular loop used by Nordic skiers and snowshoers. The yurt provides easy access to over 27 miles of groomed and 50 miles of marked ski trails. The yurt is located in a high shaded glen, which provides extra shade in the summer. The view from the yurt is one of pine trees and the outhouse has a great view of Pilot's Peak. There is a large (24'x32') deck to play on. Snow is usually available for skiing from December 1 to April 7.

Difficulty:

Advanced beginner to intermediate. The difficulty of touring trails can increase in poor snow conditions and weather. Skiers can expect a steady climb on the north side of the Gold Fork loop. Climbing skins are recommended for those with heavy packs. Individuals should be thoroughly prepared and travel with someone who has been to the yurt and can readily find it. The Gold Fork loop is generally groomed on Thursday or Friday from December 1 to March 15. You should not count on the trail being groomed, but a freshly groomed trail will substantially reduce the amount of energy necessary to get to the yurt.

Where to Park:

The Gold Fork Park N' Ski parking lot is 20 miles north of Idaho City on Highway 21. An Idaho Park N' Ski permit is required to park in this plowed area. Please park your vehicles close together and parallel in front of the toilet. The Department of Transportation snow plow operators become frustrated when they cannot completely plow the parking lot. You should also bring a shovel because you might have to dig your car out in case it gets plowed in. Do not park on Highway 21.

How to Get to the Yurt:

The trails are marked with blue and yellow diamond shapes, called blazes, attached to trees. The recommended approach to the yurt is to leave the parking lot from the north side of the Gold Fork loop. Follow the blue blazes for about 2.2 miles. At the Gold Fork/Lodgepole intersection you will see a large (2') yellow sign. Follow the yellow blazes about 400 yards until you see the yurt. You cannot see the yurt from the Gold Fork or Lodgepole trails.

Elevation Gain and Distance:

About 250 feet over 2.5 miles (one-way).

Water:

The nearest water is about 1 mile away and is not easily accessible in the winter. Your best bet is to use the large pot provided to melt snow on the wood stove. We recommend boiling the water for 10 minutes before using.

Wood Pile:

Wood for the stove is located under the yurt deck. You may have to dig your way to the woodpile.

Special Equipment Needed:

Several members of the party should carry portable snow shovels.

Maps Needed:

Idaho City Area Yurt and Trail System, USFS Forest Road, and USGS 7.5 minute topographic, "Lowman and Big Owl Creek."

Global Positioning System Locations (UTM):

Whispering Pines Yurt	11 T 611078 E
	4872599 N

Gold Fork Parking Lot	11 T 611850 E
	4871608 N

WARNING:

Winter travel and the use of the yurt can be dangerous. Do not undertake yurt trips without careful preparation and a serious discussion of the dangers with ALL members of your group.